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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

25X1A

COUNTRY Venezuela

SUBJECT Port of La Guaira/Port Facilities/Water Depth/
Requirements

PLACE ACQUIRED
(BY SOURCE)

DATE ACQUIRED
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DATE DISTR. 24 Sep 54

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SOURCE

The Office of Naval Intelligence furnished the following information to CIA for IAC dissemination in accordance with paragraph 3(c), NSCID 7. (DIO-11ND Conf report No 338-541/)

1. General Information. La Guaira, about 50,000 population, is the largest port in Venezuela. It is the gate-way to Caracas, capital of the country, and is situated at the foot of the Avila Mountain which reaches close to the shore line, running eastward and westward. Approaching La Guaira, this mountain is the best land mark in daylight and can be seen from 50 miles off. The coast is formed by a range of mountains close to the shore, the Avila being the highest one. La Guaira was founded by Diego de Oropesa in 1589.

Steamship companies operating regularly in this port area:

Aloca Steamship Company	Italian Line
Blue Star Line	Johnson Line
Compagnie Generale Transatlantique (Branch)	Lykes Brothers
Compania Venezolana Navegacion	Mamoli Line
Flota Lanza	Moore-McCormack Lines, Inc.
Flota Mercante Argentina	Northern Anchor (Spanish)
Hamburg America Line	Pope & Talbot Line
Harrison Line	Royal Mail Line
Horn Line	Royal Netherland SS CO. (KNSM)
Independence Line	Sagunay Terminals, Ltd.

The port is presently handling about 90 ships monthly, mostly with import cargo only. Tonnage moved averages about 70,000 tons monthly. Vessels work quickly and no delay is experienced. Port facilities have been improved considerably and are going through their last stage of the expansion program which, when completed, will have adequate facilities to double the present tonnage of cargo handled.

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2. Anchorage. Ships anchor in La Guaira Bay about one half mile off the docks in 40 feet of water. The sand ocean bottom makes good holding ground. The bay is unprotected, but weather conditions are always safe.
3. Buoys. No buoys in port. At the end of both breakwaters there are two lights, one red and one green indicating entrance to docks. Both breakwaters protect docks from heavy swell all year around.
4. Depth of Water. In the anchorage, 40 feet; in port, 32 feet all over. Recently dredged.
5. Pilots. Pilotage is compulsory, the pilots, who are considered fair, take vessels from the anchorage to the piers and vice versa. Pilots are under the Navy, but the government does not accept any liability for any acts, faults or negligence on their part. Docking turn is assigned in accordance with the time of arrival or anchoring. Pilots use their own launch.
6. Launches. Several are available, but not dependable.
7. Entering Harbor. Vessels may enter the harbor at any time of the day or night, but are not permitted to berth during dark hours unless previous arrangements are made on overtime rate.
8. Clearance. Ships may clear the port at any time of the day or night.
9. Reception of Vessels. Port authorities board all incoming vessels at the dock. Neither the Customs nor the Port doctors will board a newly arrived vessel between 1700 and 0700 hours unless requested previously in writing on overtime rate. Cigarettes and liquor are expected by the boarding authorities. Two National Guards acting on Customs duty remain on board during the ship's stay in port, they are to be given accommodations and food and must not be offered drinks.
10. Wireless. Ships at sea find communication satisfactory.
11. Weather. Weather at La Guaira is very irregular. The annual mean temperature is 85 degrees F. Light rainy season usually from April to June with heavy rains from August to November. Winds from February to April fresh from North, from April to July light from North. July to October variable and very often fresh from South, and from October to February light from North. Usually wind is light in the morning and freshens around noon.
12. Garbage, Ashes and Rubbish. Garbage, ashes and rubbish must be kept on board because dropping these into the harbor is prohibited. Heavy fines are levied if regulation is broken.
13. Port Officials. Quarantine is passed any time of day or night. If vessel comes from a Venezuelan port no Sanitary authority will board, then it is not necessary to hoist the quarantine flag. Customs will also board day or night. He will ask for customary papers such as visaed bill of lading, visaed copy of manifest, sealed visaed Consular envelope, crew list, passenger list, stores list and tally books. National Guards require personal effects list, three copies of crew lists, passenger lists and seal the slop chest and liquor store. Port Captain specifically requires the presentation of the Venezuelan Tonnage Certificate and Port Captain sailing permit from previous port, also copies of crew and passenger lists. They issue crew landing cards. Immigration officer will ask for passenger list and extends landing cards for passengers.

Note: Heavy fine is levied if selling of cigarettes or merchandise is discovered on board. All crew members must declare all personal effects. If vessel is searched, undeclared effects are seized. Until port officials complete their formalities no one is allowed to go ashore or come aboard.

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14. Chamber of Commerce. The La Guaira Chamber of Commerce publishes extracts from the cargo manifests of all vessels calling at the port.
15. Fresh Water. Supplied by pipe line at all docks, 20 tons per hour.
16. Fuel Oil. Supplied on trucks but must be ordered in advance.
17. Lighters. Grace Line and Alcoa have stationed some steel lighters which are in almost continual use and not for rent.
18. Tugs. Port Captain Office operates two tugs, 650 h.p. Diesel engines, its service is compulsory, vessels over five thousand net tons must use both. On overtime hours fees are double.
19. Regulations. All vessels must have the Venezuelan flag hoisted on the foremast and must place rat guards and protector so that circulating water from condenser, etc., does not spill onto the dock. Ashes, debris and garbage are not to be dropped. Visitors must be provided with Customs permit. Fines will be imposed on the offenders.
20. Running Lines. Lines must be handled by ship's agents' personnel.
21. Shore Leave. No restrictions once landing cards are issued. Master should report in writing to agent if any crew member fails to join ship when leaving port.
22. Reefer Cargo. No facilities for storage of reefer cargo. Consignees take delivery immediately after discharge. Discharge is recommended during daylight hours.
23. Repairs. There are no facilities for major ship repairs in La Guaira and minor repair work is reported poorly done.
24. Hazardous Commodity. Vessels with explosives or ammunition cannot dock, even if it is cargo in transit. Necessary arrangements must be cleared with local authorities first. It is recommended before contemplating any movement of explosives to advise details sufficiently in advance.
25. Heavy Lift Equipment. Consists of a goose-neck floating crane with an estimated 20 ton safe lift capacity. This crane is not high enough to lift deck cargo off a vessel the size of a Liberty, but is used to handle heavy lifts from shore to lighter, etc. There are sufficient numbers of shore cranes of different capacity, from 10 to 20 tons.
26. Longshoremen. Longshoremen are called Caleta and receive the cargo on the dock and warehouses. A normal gang is comprised of 10 men.
27. Stevedoring. Stevedores, likewise longshoremen, are part of the government service, each one being paid according to the number of tons handled. A normal gang of stevedores is comprised of 11 men. Discharging operations are done under the responsibility of the vessel and the government does not accept any liability for any acts, faults or negligence on their part; however, if reported they willingly take necessary measures to prevent improper handling of cargo. Stevedores and longshoremen must be requested four hours in advance during office hours. There are 35 steady gangs both of stevedores and Caleta and sufficient number of extra laborers to form additional gangs. Period of work: Starts at 0700 and continues until midnight with the hours of 1100 to 1230 and 1630 to 1800 being break hours. Only with special permission can a vessel work after midnight to complete discharge. No work on Sundays or holidays, excepting, passenger vessels.

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28. Berths. The port has been expanded recently and present facilities can accommodate 12 large cargo vessels and four passenger vessels. Length of docks total seven thousand feet.
29. Dock Equipment. There is a shortage of modern cargo handling equipment and most incoming cargo is hauled from the pier in railroad flat cars and trucks to warehouses. New equipment, however, has been ordered and this hardship is expected to be overcome in the near future.
30. Terminal Facilities. Consist of the following: Two parallel piers running east and west. The northernmost pier is of wood and concrete construction, five hundred meters long and uncovered. It is actually a concrete breakwater designed so as to allow three vessels to berth alongside its lea side. The southernmost or finger pier was completed 10 years ago and is of steel and concrete construction, 350 meters long by 72 meters wide and houses two double deck steel and concrete warehouses. This pier can accommodate two large ships on its northern side and two large ships also on its southern side. Both piers are railroad equipped. One passenger pier, opposite or west side of finger pier, completed January 1952, of steel and concrete construction, 346 meters long and 50 meters wide and houses two double deck steel and concrete construction warehouses. The upper deck is used for baggage inspection room and offices. One dock running east and west, three thousand feet long (nine hundred meters) that can accommodate six large cargo vessels. Passenger pier accommodates four vessels, two in each side. All docks are protected by wooden stringpieces and bits are about 60 feet distant from each other. There is an apron of about 50 feet on all docks.
31. Warehouses. Housed by passenger pier has 94,000 square feet. Housed by finger pier running parallel to breakwater dock, has 320,000 square feet floor space on both decks. Warehouse Libertador of concrete construction and asbestos roof is estimated at 150,000 square feet floor space. Concrete Warehouses, four in total, built of steel frames and corrugated galvanized iron walls and roof estimated with 150,000 square feet floor space. New Malecón Warehouse - There is a shortage of warehouse space in La Guaira which will be relieved by the addition of this new Malecón warehouse to be inaugurated 24 Jul 54. This warehouse is situated at the new dock running east and west. Its present length is 450 meters, but eventually it will cover the whole nine hundred meters length of the Malecón dock. Construction is of steel and concrete and has a floor space capacity of 376,740 square feet and on top, or second deck, it is specially designed for open storage with 301,392 floor space usable. Along this dock and warehouse 16 electric cranes run on rails with lifting capacity of six tons and can be used both to handle cargo below or on top from ship's holds. Important: Space is allocated on a strict first-come first-served basis. As for future expansion, it is contemplated to extend the warehouse to the end of the Malecón dock doubling its capacity, both covered and open space.
32. Shortlanded Cargo. The steamship company is allowed 30 days in which to replace any shortlanded cargo. If the goods have not been landed upon expiration of this period, the company is fined an amount equal to the duty on the goods.
33. Overlanded Cargo. No fine imposed provided that within 60 days the steamship company present a shortlanded certificate from the port to which the goods were consigned, and ships them out; after period expires the fine amounts to \$100 per package overlanded.

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34. Delivery of Cargo. Cargo is delivered to Customs in the warehouse. It is tallied twice by Customs and ship's agents and when this is completed Customs issues a receipt or Acta de Confrontación. In this document shortages or overages are shown. Upon discharge any broken cases or damaged cargo is set aside under the agent's custody and when discharge has been completed these parcels are checked and weighed by the Customs Inspector, the weight and damage being confirmed in writing by the ship's agents and approved by Customs. The damage is then repaired and received by Customs. From this damage list the agent prepares the Outturn report and Over and Short Report from the Acta de Confrontación.

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LIBRARY SUBJECT AND ARAE CODES

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756.56	8E
756.548	8E
756.549	8E
756.545	8E
756.543	8E
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